

Fred Sullivan
Chairman

Janine L. Burke
Executive Director



Scott Avedisian
Mayor

Warwick Sewer Authority
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Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 14, 2010, 5:30 p.m.
Warwick Sewer Authority Conference Room
125 Arthur W. Devine Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02886

Board Members in Attendance:	Guests:
Fred Sullivan, Chairman	TGIF Program participants
Aaron Guckian, Secretary	Roberta Steinle, Human Services
Steven Sylven, P.E.	Patty St. Amant, Human Services
Gary Jarvis	Todd Ravenelle, GRA, Inc.
	Steve Cabral, Crossman Engineering, Inc.
Board Members not Present:	John and Suzanne Richmond
Peter Ginaitt	Charles McPhillips
	Raymond Morgan
	Henry Cruz
	Kirby Avenue property owners
Staff Present:	
Janine L. Burke, Executive Director	John Revens, WSA Legal Counsel
Betty Anne Rossi, Pretreatment Coordinator	Mat Solitro, Collections System Manager
Patrick Doyle, Assistant Superintendent	Lynda Ortiz, Finance/Customer Serv. Mgr.
Lynn F. Owens, Administrative Coordinator	

1. Call to Order At 5:30 p.m. Chairman Sullivan called this meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of minutes from the regular meeting held August 24, 2010.

ACTION: Mr. Sylven moved approval of the minutes. Mr. Jarvis seconded the motion. Chairman Sullivan, Messrs. Guckian, Sylven and Jarvis voted in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

3. Turn Grease Into Fuel (T.G.I.F.) Program: Proposal for the City of Warwick

Five 7th grade students from Westerly, RI, made a presentation to the Board regarding their Turn Grease Into Fuel (TGIF) Program. The students (Junior WIN team) are part of the Westerly Innovations Network (WIN), a non-profit

student-led community problem solving team. Project T.G.I.F. collects waste cooking oil from local residents and restaurants and converts it into biodiesel. Not only does this keep grease out of the sewer collection system, but the biofuel is then given to families in need through the existing local emergency heat assistance agents. The City of Warwick has pledged its support of the initiative; the WSA, Department of Public Works and the Human Services Department will work with the Junior WIN team to expand the grease recycling program in Warwick starting in the fall.

The Board thanked the members of the Junior WIN team for their outstanding program.

4. March 30, 2010 Pawtuxet River Flooding

- a. Financial Report of Flood Expenses: Director Burke provided an up-to-date report on flood expenses. She said spending has slowed considerably.
- b. Conceptual Study of Flood Protection Improvements:
Crossman Engineering, \$58,630.00

ACTION: Mr. Steve Cabral, P.E. made a presentation to the Board on conceptual plans to improve flood protection at the WWTF, outlining many different options to consider. Director Burke stated the study will look at our vulnerability and examine all possible funding options for a project of this magnitude. Mr. Cabral stated the flood showed that the existing dike was designed and built very soundly. He stated if one of the conceptual options to improve the levee system were selected and it was designed, the permitting process would be very difficult and would probably take over a year.

Director Burke stated we need to look at this issue; it is a vulnerability. She stated funding is of primary concern; there are grants available from RIEMA that could be applied to the cost of the conceptual study (\$58,000). Mr. Jarvis asked what the range of cost is on the conceptual plans. Mr. Cabral stated to re-build the earthen structure may cost from \$2,500 to \$5,000 per foot, depending on height and the suitability of the soil below it.

Mr. Cabral stated we can keep the study as conceptual as possible, with a not to exceed price looking at all options with a detailed assessment. Mr. Sylvén questioned whether Crossman Engineering is the best firm to do this study. Director Burke stated staff has also considered that question. She said if we were to go down this road and start this project with Crossman, we don't want to be changing engineers half way through. She said we were concerned too that they had the geo-technical expertise to be able to continue the project through completion. She said we may want Crossman to do the study and draft the specifications for the actual detailed design.

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Mr. Cabral reminded the Board that Crossman holds a contract with the City of Warwick to provide engineering services. He said in order to show the City that they were the firm to hire, they assembled a team that included Weston & Sampson, who has the geo-technical and structural engineers to supplement the Crossman staff. Mr. Sylven expressed concern about this high profile project that might be subject to scrutiny. Director Burke shared his concerns. She said this information will be helpful in developing conceptual plans and a budget estimate for improvements to the levee system and that she will submit this information to RIEMA for possible flood mitigation grant funds.

- c. Completion of flood related pump station electrical work:
Kent County Electrical Services, \$100,000.00

ACTION: Director Burke stated this request for procurement includes some flood related electrical work that has been completed. Assistant Superintendent Doyle asked that a drawdown purchase order be created to complete the necessary electrical repairs and improvements at our pump stations based on damage incurred during the flood. He expects additional work will be needed beyond this procurement request.

Mr. Sylven stated this work is absolutely necessary. Mr. Guckian moved approval. Mr. Sylven seconded the motion. Chairman Sullivan, Messrs. Guckian, Sylven and Jarvis voted in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

5. Operations and Maintenance Division

6. Construction Division

- a. **Award of Bid: Contract 86D Longmeadow Lateral Sewer System**

ACTION: Mr. Todd Ravenelle, P.E., GRA, Inc., stated we received six bids on the construction project. He said his firm had reviewed the bids and tabulated them and that D'Ambra Construction Co., Inc. is the low bidder at \$3,185,742.53. He said it appears to be a fair bid and recommended that D'Ambra Construction Co., Inc. be awarded the bid. Mat Solitro stated that is staff's recommendation as well.

Mr. Jarvis made a motion to award the Longmeadow lateral sewer system construction bid to D'Ambra Construction Co., Inc. in the amount of \$3,185,742.53. Mr. Sylven seconded the motion. Chairman Sullivan, Messrs. Guckian, Sylven and Jarvis voted in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

- b. Sewer Project Update Report

- i. **Governor Francis Farms II:** Mat Solitro, Collection Systems Manager, reported that all the laterals and all the water work is

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complete in the project area. He said all the lines are currently being air-tested. He said D'Ambra dug for the pump station wet well today; the concrete structure will be delivered tomorrow and it will be set in place.

- ii. **Bayside IV/Longmeadow:** Mat Solitro reported that bids were opened for construction; D'Ambra Construction is the apparent low bidder.
- iii. **Kirby Avenue sewer extension:** Mat Solitro stated we are working out some minor details with procuring the easement. Attorney Revens stated WSA has recorded easements in hand for the sewer extension. Director Burke stated the property owners wanted assurances in writing that whatever changes WSA made in the easement area would not adversely affect the surface water runoff. Board members, legal counsel and staff discussed the terms and language of the draft letter and the WSA procedure for negotiating easement agreements. Chairman Sullivan stated when the letter is accepted and executed, construction will begin.
- iv. **Cowesett Road sewer extension**
 - 1. John and Suzanne Richmond, 435 Cowesett Rd (objecting)
 - 2. Charles D. McPhillips, 445 Cowesett Rd (objecting)
 - 3. Mr. Raymond Morgan, 100 Ginger Street (objecting)

Director Burke stated these property owners received sewer service as a result of our sewer line extension to the WFD Station No. 5 on Cowesett Road. Mr. Sylven suggested that because WSA extended sewer service to the Fire Department strictly for the benefit of the City, the residents should be given the option of putting the assessment in abeyance until such time as these people decide to connect to the sewer. Mr. Jarvis expressed caution with that approach.

Director Burke stated following the guidelines of our enabling legislation, if a sewer line passes by a property, WSA assesses the property owner. She said Mr. Morgan has filed an appeal of the assessment with the Sewer Board of Review.

Mrs. Richmond, 435 Cowesett Road, stated they were forced to accept the sewer service because their neighbor has a failing septic system and they needed sewers. She said she doesn't feel they were treated fairly.

Mr. Charles McPhillips, 445 Cowesett Road, stated he was approached by representatives of the WSA two times earlier this year, asking if he would like to be part of the sewer extension to the Warwick Fire Department Station No. 5 on Cowesett Road. He

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stated he understood that participation was voluntary. Mr. McPhillips stated the cut in the road to the fire station is twenty feet away from his property line and contends that his parcel was not needed to extend service to the fire station. He stated the sewer line was then extended past his property to provide sewer service to property owners at 425 Cowesett Road. Mr. McPhillips thinks that property owner should have paid the developer's cost for the extension of sewers to his property. He suggested a fair resolution would be an assessment at the Diamond Hill rate, or a rebate at the developer's rate. Mr. McPhillips was encouraged to appeal to the Sewer Board of Review to preserve his right to challenge the assessment before that board.

Mr. Morgan, 100 Ginger Street, stated the sewer line does pass by his vacant lot. He stated he does not know why he should pay an assessment when the sewer line was intended for the fire station. He said he has drainage issues associated with storm drains on his lot and contends that the lot is not buildable. He would like the City to clean out the catch basins and storm drains on the lot. Director Burke stated Mr. Morgan has filed an appeal with the Sewer Board of Review and will likely see some relief based on the location of drainage easements at the property.

Mr. Guckian suggested this matter be tabled for further research and review. Chairman Sullivan stated staff will look at all the issues that have been brought up and we will make a decision at next month's meeting. Property owners were encouraged to file an appeal with the Sewer Board of Review.

7. Billing Services Division

- a. WSA Sewer Usage Rate Schedule and Fee Structure
Review of public hearing held September 9, 2010
ACTION: Discussion only.

Director Burke stated public comments are being accepted until September 27th. She will share the comments with the Board and post them on the WSA website. Mr. Sylven asked about the sewer rates in neighboring communities, and how they compare with the rates of WSA. Director Burke stated the Narragansett Bay Commission conducts a sewer survey every few years; WSA is in the top 25% in terms of average usage charges, along with other tertiary treatment facilities (West Warwick and Cranston). Director Burke stated while the changes seem drastic, they are in line with national standards and those of Narragansett Bay Commission.

Mr. Sylven stated he can empathize with the small business owners who came to the public hearing and expressed concern about the proposed

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increases in service charges. He suggested WSA soften the impact of proposed changes to our rates.

Chairman Sullivan stated Mr. Dave Bebyn is going to start looking at this again with a whole new perspective to phase in the changes to the rate structure and fees. Director Burke stated we may look at ratcheting up the commercial charges, or look at a longer time frame to pay back the City. She said she will ask Mr. Bebyn to submit a cost estimate on a new cost of service model based on phasing in the commercial charges over five years, and increasing the payback period on our debt to the City. Chairman Sullivan stated this item will be considered at our next meeting.

b. Appeal of Regulation No. 53 On-Site Grant Funds

Mr. Henry E. Cruz, 150 Lancaster Avenue (Plat 257 Lot 0165)

ACTION: Director Burke stated Mr. Cruz lives within the Facilities Plan in the Northwest Gorton Pond project area, which is only 30% designed. She said Mr. Cruz is requesting grant funds to defray the cost of improving his failed cesspool. Director Burke stated Regulation No. 53 provides grant funds for properties outside our Facilities Plan; Mr. Cruz is appealing the denial of his application for funds.

Mr. Jarvis moved to approve the release of grant funds for Mr. Cruz. Mr. Sylven seconded the motion. Chairman Sullivan, Messrs. Guckian, Sylven and Jarvis voted in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

8. Administrative Items

a. Director's Report

- i. Financial Report
- ii. Administrative Schedule

ACTION: Director Burke stated the public information meeting on the Longmeadow sewer project is scheduled for September 23rd at City Hall Council Chambers. The next Board meeting is scheduled for October 28th.

b. Chairman's Report: No report.

9. Consent Agenda – Correspondence

- a. CRMC modification of Assent, Norton's Shipyard & Marina (8-4-10)
- b. FEMA notice on document submittal (8-19-10)
- c. WSA response to Mr. Durand's request for information (8-23-10)
- d. WSA to City Council on revised rate study and public hearing (8-25-10)
- e. WSA Financial Report to the City Council (9-1-10)
- f. CRMC Assent for WSA/Spring Green Corporation (9-3-10)

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ACTION: Mr. Guckian moved to accept the consent agenda items. Mr. Jarvis seconded the motion. Chairman Sullivan, Messrs. Guckian, Sylven and Jarvis voted in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

10. New Business: No new business presented.

11. Old Business

- a. Buttonwoods Beach Association/Buttonwoods Fire District
- b. WSA Deferment Policy
- c. Mandatory Sewer Connection Program
- d. Sewer Tie-In Loan Fund
- e. Facilities Plan Update
- f. Safety Valve Insurance Revenue Sharing Proposal
- g. Amendments to By-Laws
- h. Modifications to Septage Hauling Regulations

12. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Comments only may be addressed to the WSA Board who will take them under advisement.

Mr. Joe Almonte, 170 Kirby Avenue, Warwick, provided his comments to the Board regarding the Kirby Avenue sewer extension, emphasizing the urgency of the situation and thanking the Board for their time and efforts. Mr. Gary Taravella submitted written comment about the delay in extending the sewer line at Kirby. He stated he appreciates all the work the Board has done on this project.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Guckian moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sylven seconded the motion. Chairman Sullivan, Messrs. Guckian, Sylven and Jarvis voted in favor of the motion. Motion approved.

At 7:42 p.m. this meeting ended.

Aaron Guckian, Secretary

Date of Approval